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Bibliotheca of Photius

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THE LITERARY CRITICISM IN THE *BIBLIOTHECA* OF PHOTIUS

BY LA RUE VAN HOOK

Although well known as a lexicographer Photius has met with scant recognition as a critic of Greek literature, and has been comparatively neglected by students of ancient literary criticism. This neglect, doubtless, is due to the time in which he lived and to the fact that Photius is interested primarily in post-classical authors, prose writers mainly ecclesiastical and historical, and that he is not a literary critic *par excellence*. For it is the thought and content of the writers examined with which he is most concerned. His critical estimates we may consider in a manner but *obiter dicta*, and these may be short or long or entirely omitted. Yet an examination of his *Bibliotheca*¹ reveals a considerable mass of very interesting criticism and a critical faculty of no mean power and originality.²

Photius belongs to the latter half of the ninth century and was Patriarch of Constantinople for many years. His *Bibliotheca*, as we are informed in the Introduction, is a first-hand account or review of some 280 volumes, which was compiled for the use of his beloved brother Tarasius, ἡγαπημένῳ ἀδελφῷ Ταρασίῳ. This collection, which is encyclopedic in character, consists largely of summaries or epitomes of the writings under consideration, usually with some critical remarks on style or content. No books written in Latin and no poets are included in the collection.

It is the aim of this paper to examine all the significant literary criticism found in Photius,³ laying special stress, however, on his criticism of classical writers and those later authors who are of most interest to the student of classical Greek literature. These authors

¹ Ed. Bekker (Berlin, 1824).

² Cf. Saintsbury *Hist. of Crit.*, Vol. I, pp. 175-86; Krumbacher, *Byzantinische Literaturgeschichte*, p. 517.

³ The criticism of Photius on the Attic orators I have already treated in a paper in the *Transactions of the A. P. A.* for 1908.

we shall consider according to their provinces and in the following arbitrary order: I Historians, II Romancers, III Rhetoricians, IV Miscellaneous writers, mainly Ecclesiastical.

I. THE HISTORIANS

On writers of history we find considerable discussion and criticism. But we shall see that with the exception of Ctesias it is to the later historiographers that Photius largely gives his attention.

Considering these writers in chronological order we find that the account of Herodotus¹ is surprisingly short and disappointing. It runs as follows:

Herodotus is the model (*κανών*) of the Ionic dialect, as Thucydides is of the Attic. He has made use of myths and many digressions, as a result of which, sweetness of thought² flows through his narratives, even if these at times obscure the comprehension of the historical account and its peculiar and appropriate style, since truth does not wish its accuracy obscured by myths nor to be led astray more than is proper by digressions.

Digressions (*παρεκβάσεις*), divagations (*παρεκτροπαί*), and parentheses (*παρενθήκαι, παρενθέσεις*) are a pet aversion of Photius. So in the criticism on Ctesias³ there is a comment on this, the great fault of Herodotus. It may seem strange that Photius should dwell at length on this blemish⁴ on good historical style and keep silent on the many virtues of the Father of History. The period at which Photius wrote, however, and his purpose must not be forgotten. The excellence of *οἱ ἀρχαῖοι*, so much read and so well known, was taken for granted by this writer and critic of

¹Codex 60.

²This expression *ἡ κατὰ διάνοιαν γλυκύτης* is probably technical, corresponding to the *ἡ κατ' ἐννοιαν* of Hermogenes (Spengel II, p. 357) who in this chap. *περὶ γλυκύτητος* affirms that sweetness results most of all from the use of the mythical—*καὶ μάλιστα γλυκύτητα καὶ ἡδονὴν ἐν λόγῳ αἱ μυθικαὶ τῶν ἐννοιῶν ποιοῦσι*. Herodotus is cited as a conspicuous example. See also Aristeides (*ibid.*, p. 499), *γλυκύτης . . . κατὰ γνώμην οὕτως, ὅταν τις ταῖς ἔξωθεν ἐπινοαῖς χρήται, ὅλον ἐξ ἱστοριῶν καὶ παροιμιῶν καὶ μύθων*. Cf. Quint. x. 1. 73: *dulcis et candidus et fusus Herodotus*.

³Cod. 72.

⁴Dion. H. *Ep. ad Pomp.* iii in his lengthy comparison of Herodotus and Thucydides does not mention any such fault in Herodotus, and, in fact, has little but praise. He commends especially the *variety* which Herodotus gives to his history. Butcher (ed. of Arist. *Poetics*, p. 164) speaks of the history of Herodotus as having a unity of design, which is obscured but not effaced by the numerous digressions.

the ninth century. It is to the later writers that Photius wishes to devote his attention. Further, it was his aim to review those books which had been read or discussed in his brother's absence.

So we discover that Thucydides does not receive separate treatment. We have seen that in the criticism on Herodotus he is mentioned as the canon of the Attic dialect. So also in the discussion of Dio Cassius,¹ who is said to be his imitator, Thucydides is called *ὁ κανών*. But nowhere is his history discussed at length.

Of the historian Ctesias² and his works there is a long account and on p. 45 a criticism of his style as follows:

This historian is both clear and extremely plain in style, whereby his narrative acquires charm (*ἡδονή*³) as well. He uses the Ionic dialect in some expressions but not universally as Herodotus. He does not, however, like that writer, by unseasonable digressions (*ἐκτροπαί*) divert the progress of his narrative. He is not free, however, from the myths for which Herodotus is censured. Especially are these to be found in his *Indica*. The charm of his history is due to the method of treatment of his narratives, which most of all affects the emotions, employs the unexpected and is diversified with the mythical. His style is somewhat looser than it should be, so as to approach the colloquial. But the *λόγος* of Herodotus in this particular and in other respects of the power and art of narration is the canon of the Ionic dialect.

Since the writings of Ctesias are lost, Photius' abridgment, filling some thirteen pages of our edition, and his criticism are of extraordinary interest.

Xenophon, as well as Thucydides, fails to receive special consideration. In Cod. 83 there is a short characterization of Dionysius of Halicarnassus and in Cod. 70 the following criticism of Diodorus Siculus:

His style is clear and unadorned, especially suited to historical composition, neither striving, as one may say, for an excessive imitation of the Attic dialect or the archaic, nor yielding completely to the current idiom, but preferring the *middle* type, avoiding tropes, and other ornaments which poetry employs, except that the mythical gods and heroes of the Greeks are introduced.

¹Cod. 71.

²Cod. 72.

³Dion. H. *De comp. verb.* 10 says that the style of Ctesias and Xenophon is extremely charming, but not as noble as it should have been. Demet. *De eloc.* 215 calls Ctesias an artist in vividness, *ἐναργέας δημοουργός*, in all his writings.

This is perhaps a more favorable critique than Diodorus really deserves.

The style of Josephus¹ deservedly wins commendation, for the historian of the Jews is admitted to have many excellences, causing him to be called "the Greek Livy" by St. Jerome. Photius says that

Josephus is pure in his style, masterly in giving the effect of dignity combined with clearness and charm, and is convincing and pleasing in his speeches fertile in enthymemes on either side and sententious if any man ever was; also most able to represent passions by his discourse and skilled at arousing and soothing the emotions.

The long eulogy of Arrian¹ may be quoted entire to illustrate Photius' command of the technical language of criticism.

Arrian is second to none of those who have best written histories, for he is excellent at concise narration and nowhere does he mar the continuity of his history by unseasonable divagations and parentheses. He is novel or original (*καινοπρεπής*³) in composition rather than in diction, in such a manner that in no other way could his story be told more clearly or vividly. He uses a clear, euphonious, rounded (*στρογγύλος*) style wherein smoothness is mixed with grandeur. His novelties of diction are not violent innovations but are both very restrained and striking, so as to be figurative but not merely a substitution for the customary word. Wherefore he gains clearness not only from this but most of all from the arrangement, order, and constitution of his narrative, which is the art of clearness. For the use of ordinary periods is to be found especially in amateurs and if used to excess lowers style to the mean and commonplace, which is not characteristic of Arrian, although he is clear. Of figures he thus uses the ellipse, not of periods, but of diction, so that the ellipse is not even perceived. And if one should try to add what is lacking he would seem to add what is superfluous and not to complete the ellipse. He is excellent in that he uses a variety of figures which do not all at once deviate from natural, unaffected usage, but they are introduced gradually and woven in from the beginning so as not to annoy with satiety nor disturb by sudden excess. To sum up, in the composition of history many even of the ancients (*τῶν ἀρχαίων* = the old classic writers) would be seen on comparison, to be inferiors to Arrian.

In Cod. 58, Arrian is said to be an imitator of Xenophon, not lacking in rhetorical skill and ability. In this criticism we see

¹ Cod. 47.

² Cod. 92.

³ Anon. (Walz *Rhet. Graec.* VIII, 646) in a chap. *περὶ καινοπρεποῦς σχήματος*, gives an example from Arrian.

Photius at his best. Arrian is easily the superior of his contemporaries in method and style and his virtues are clearly pointed out in well-chosen language. Further, this criticism is all the more valuable to reveal his critical acumen from the fact that it is doubtless an independent judgment, expressed in original language which is not the case with certain other criticisms, as, for example, the remarks on the Attic orators.¹ Let us note a few points here: Arrian is praised for refraining from the use of digressions, the employment of which, as we have seen is a *bête noir* to the Patriarch. Clearness, smoothness, and grandeur are features of the historian's periods, qualities which are produced and enhanced by originality of composition and a variety of appropriate figures. These distinguish the literary artist from the amateur. For τὸ ἔντεχρον τῆς σαφηνείας, the art of clearness is found ἐν τῇ διασκευῇ καὶ τάξει καὶ καταστάσει τοῦ διηγήματος.

A brief notice suffices for the plain and unaffected style of Appian² whose excellence as a historian of war wins approbation.

Dio Cassius³ is praised for the dignity and nobility of his style, for the choice of his expressions, the rhythm and artistic construction of his periods and for clearness. He is called an imitator of Thucydides and even surpasses somewhat his master in clearness, although inferior to him in other respects. These commendatory remarks while not altogether undeserved, must be considered far too generous for a historian whose style is often monotonous.

The style of Herodian⁴ is clear, brilliant, and charming; his diction is chaste, neither striving overmuch in the imitation of the Attic dialect and thus doing violence to the natural charm of the vernacular nor relaxed to meanness by neglect of the precepts of art. Neither does he plume himself on superfluities of language nor does he omit anything that is essential. In a word, in all the excellent qualities which make the writer of history, he is surpassed by few.

Photius' criticism aptly applies to Herodian's style in narrative which is elegant and even brilliant. But with the commendation in the last sentence we may justly take issue.

¹These criticisms go back to Caecilius of Calacte. It is well-nigh impossible to determine the full extent of Photius' indebtedness to preceding writers. For biographical material he is more or less indebted to the Ὀνοματολόγος of Hesychius of Miletus (cf. Krumbacher, *op. cit.*, pp. 324 and 518). E. g., cf. Photius on Gregory, p. 341, with Suidas, s. v.

²Cod. 57.

³Cod. 71.

⁴Cod. 99.

II. THE ROMANCERS

Unfortunately the poets are completely ignored and we are thus deprived of critical estimates in that most interesting field. Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar are mentioned but a few times, and then but casually in quotations.¹ But we find that Photius had an extensive acquaintance with the novelists and that he has included in his collection, in the summaries of books which he has read, outlines of plots from the romances of Antonius Diogenes, Iamblichus, Heliodorus, Achilles Tatius, and Lucian, with critical comment on style and contents. To the student of the history of the novel these articles are of great importance.

To Antonius Diogenes² the author of the fantastic *Marvels beyond Thule* (οἱ τῶν ὑπὲρ Θούλην ἀπίστων λόγοι) are given three pages. Of this patchwork of geographical adventure we have only this summary. Photius says that this work seems to be the source of Lucian's *True History* and a model for later romances. Further, his style is clear and for the most part distinct. His mythical subject-matter is pleasing and his marvelous stories give the impression of reality.

The article on Iamblichus³ is our only source for a knowledge of the contents of the *δραματικόν* of that writer. At the beginning Photius compares from the view-point of morality the three great romancers, and states that Iamblichus makes less display of obscenity than Achilles Tatius, but is more shameless than the Phoenician Heliodorus; and while the three writers have practically the same aim in the composition of their love-dramas, Heliodorus is more dignified and discreet than Iamblichus, but Achilles Tatius has no sense of shame. As regards the style of Iamblichus, Photius says it is fluid and smooth (ῥέουσα καὶ μαλακή) and as much of it as is impressive in sound (ὑπόκροτον) gives the effect not so much of intensity as of titillation, so to speak, and enervation (τὸ γαργαλίζον καὶ τὸ βλακῶδες). His excellence in style is worthy of serious compositions and not of idle fictions.

¹ So e. g., Cod. 158 where Phrynicius the sophist designates Aeschylus as the most *grandiloquent* (τὸν μεγαλοφωνότατον) of the tragic poets, Sophocles as the *sweet* (τὸν γλυκύν), and Euripides as the *sage* (τὸν πάνσοφον).

² Cod. 166.

³ Cod. 94.

For that excellent extant Greek romance, the *Ethiopica* of Heliodorus,¹ Photius has high praise and we give his very satisfactory criticism entire:

His book is dramatic and in a style appropriate to the theme, for it has much simplicity and sweetness. His narrative is diversified by situations present, expected, or unforeseen, which stir the emotions, as well as by remarkable rescues from dangers, expressed in language both clear and pure. If at times, as is natural, he uses somewhat figurative expressions they are distinct and also present vividly the subject-matter. The periods are symmetrical and concisely arranged. His story deals with the love of a man and a woman, Theagenes and Chariclea, and he shows a desire for the careful observance of propriety.

Achilles Tatius,² author of the *Adventures of Leucippe and Cleitophon*, is warmly commended for his style but very severely censured for the indecency of his subject-matter. The criticism is as follows:

The book is a *δραματικόν* wherein some unseemly love-affairs are introduced. The diction and composition seem to be excellent. His style is clear and appropriately figurative when tropes are used. Most of his periods are sententious, clear, and agreeable and give pleasure to the ear. But his excessive shamelessness and impurity of sentiment depreciate the seriousness and thought throughout of the writer and cause his readers to despise or avoid him altogether. As compared with the fiction of Heliodorus his narratives have much similarity in method of treatment and invention except perhaps as regards the names of the characters and the disgusting obscenity.

One of the most interesting and important of the criticisms in the *Bibliotheca* is the one on Lucian,³ that prince of romancers. Our respect for Photius as a critic is greatly increased by the keenness of perception and soundness of judgment which he shows in the following appreciation:

In nearly all of his works Lucian is writing a comedy on Greek things; on their error in god-making, their ungovernable and intemperate licentiousness, the monstrous beliefs and fictions of even the poets and their consequent mistakes in government, and the irregular course and vicissitudes of their lives throughout, the boastful nature of their very philosophers who have naught save hypocrisy and empty pretense. In a word, as we have said, his aim is to produce a comedy, in prose, of Greek life. He seems to be one of those who worship nothing seriously; he makes fun

¹ Cod. 73.

² Cod. 87.

³ Cod. 128.

of and ridicules the creeds of others and does not posit what he himself believes, unless one calls not having a creed, a creed. In style he is of the best (*ἄριστος*) employing a diction which is clear, current, and very striking (*ἐμφατικός*). He is a lover, if anyone is, of distinctness (*εὐκρίνεια*) and purity, with brilliancy and grandeur in due proportion. His composition is so arranged that the reader seems not to be reading prose but it is as if a certain delightful song without definite accompaniment of music were dropping into the ears of the listener. And in a word, as we have said, his style is of the best (*ἄριστος*) and not in keeping with his subjects under discussion at which he knew how to laugh.

III. RHETORICIANS, GRAMMARIANS, LEXICOGRAPHERS

Several writers relatively unimportant are considered in this group for the sake of criticisms which are of interest. First that on Phrynicus,¹ the grammarian, whose volumes of excerpts, witty sayings, criticisms, etc., are said by Photius to be serviceable for those wishing to write or speak.

He is very learned but is loquacious and redundant (*λάλος καὶ περιττός*). For when he might have completed his treatise without omitting any essentials in not the fifth part of his whole work, he extended it to useless bulk by unseasonable discourse, and although he has gathered together for others the material for excellent and fair discourse, his own treatment of it is not of this character.

The rhetorician Libanius,² that prolific writer of the fourth century, has grave faults, according to Photius, largely due to his superficiality.

This writer is more serviceable in "plasmatic" (on imaginary themes) and "gymnastic" discourses than in his other writings, for by his excessive elaboration (*φιλοπονία*) and overwrought style (*περιεργία* = *curiosity* in obsolete sense) in his other works he has injured his native and, so to speak, impromptu grace and charm, and has fallen into a lack of clearness by obscuring much with parentheses and by excluding even the necessary. But in other respects in these discourses he is a canon and standard of Attic speech.

Eunapius³ likewise, who in many respects is elegant and urbane, mars his style by infelicities of diction.

In style he is elegant if one expurgates such expressions as *τὸ ἀλεκτρονῶδες* (fowl-like), *ἐλαφωδέστερον* (deer-like), *συνωδέστερον* (swine-like) and further *ἱερακῶδες* (hawk-like), *κορακῶδες* (crow-like), *πιθηκῶδες* (ape-like),

¹ Cod. 158.

² Cod. 90.

³ Cod. 77.

ποταμῶδες δάκρυον (a rivery tear) and similar offenses; for by these he both mars exceedingly and debases the nobility throughout of the language. He also uses tropes audaciously, which is a fault in a historian. The forcible impressiveness and urbanity of his style make amends in large measure for the faults which give offense.

Since Photius himself is the author of a lexicon it may be of interest to note a few comments on lexicographical works. On Helladius'¹ lexicon of words and witty sayings, he says: "The book is of use to writers and those honoring learning." On Julian's² lexicon to the ten orators:

It is evident that for the reading of the speeches of the orators the work should be of the highest value. We have run across a pretty good work of Philostratus of Tyre on the same subject. But Julian's work is better. Diodorus also wrote a similar work. I don't know whether he copied Julian or vice-versa.

Of Dorotheus,³ an author of an alphabetical lexicon of foreign and unusual words, Photius says: "It is clear that the work is not without value for scholars."

IV. MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS, MAINLY ECCLESIASTICAL

In this section of our study we shall notice a number of brief criticisms on writers mainly ecclesiastical. These quotations are made to illustrate Photius' use of trenchant and striking expressions in critical characterizations.⁴

¹Cod. 145.

²Cod. 150.

³Cod. 156.

⁴With reference to the critical vocabulary of Photius it may be said that, in general, it is quite adequate to his needs, but not extremely varied nor copious. His terminology is not richly imaginative nor metaphorical but he does not use overmuch the stereotyped terms of the later rhetoricians. We may note here a few terms which are striking by reason of infrequent occurrence in previous literature or because of their unusual metaphorical force:

ἀπάνουργος, 61. Of the *guileless λόγος* of Aeschines. Cf. Sext. Emp. *M.* 2. 77.
 αὔτοσχημάτιστος, 92. Of *simple form*.
 ἀφοριστικός, 5. *Sententious, concise*, of the ἀφ. *χαρακτήρ* of Sophronius. Cf. 44.
 For ἀφοριστικῶς, cf. Dion. H. *De Isaeo* 7. [Iamblichus.
 βλακῶδες, τό, and γαργαλίζειν, 94. Of Iamblichus' diction; see above under
 ἰδιοτροπία, 181. *Individual or peculiar style or manner*.
 λευκός, 193. *Clear, transparent*. Maximus is praised for τὸ λευκὸν εἶδος λόγου.
 πεπατημένος, 80. *Vulgar, trite*.
 σκοτέω, 164; ἐπισκοτέω, 60 (cf. Arist. *Rhet.* 3. 3); ἐπισκοτίζω, 90. *To obscure, darken, confuse*. Cf. Quint. 8. 2. 18.
 μικρολογία, 159. Of Isoc. *petty garrulity*. σύμφρασις, 164. *Context*.
 σχοινοτενής, 164, 177. 192. *Spun-out, long, prolix, wire-drawn*.
 ὑπόκροτος, 94. Of *pretentious sound*.
 χυδαιολογία, 80. *Plebeian loquacity, vulgar verbosity*.

On Gregory of Nyssa:¹ "In style he is brilliant and distils charm to the ears (*ἡδονῆς ὥσιν ἀποστάζων*)."

Eusebius: "He is everywhere lacking in charm and does not rejoice in brilliancy (*οὔτε λαμπρότητι χαίρων*)."

Gelasius:² "In style is *cheap* and debased (*εὐτελής καὶ ταπεινός*)."

Synesius:³ "He is lofty and has dignity (*ὄγκος*), but inclines to the over-poetical. His epistles drip with grace and charm (*χάριτος καὶ ἡδονῆς ἀποστάζουσαι*)."

Athanasius:⁴ "His letters are composed in a style refined, brilliant and clear, being convincing and blooming with charm (*μετὰ τοῦ χαρίεντος ἀνθοῦσαι*)."

Philip:⁵ "He is a *spouter* of words (*πολύχους*) without urbanity or grace, and is nauseating (*προσκορής*)."

Philostorgius:⁶ "He drags down (*ὑποσύρεσθαι*) the hearer *εἰς τὸ ἀσαφές καὶ οὐκ ἀεὶ χαρίεν*."

Philostratus:⁷ "Teeming with sweetness (*βρύων γλυκύτητος*)."

Andronicianus:⁸ "He makes great promises in his introduction which are not fulfilled."

John Philoponus:⁹

Μᾶλλον δὲ ματαιόπονος! His style resembles himself, as he manufactures and juggles his subject-matter which is on a par with his intellect and shaky judgment. He babbles like a fool and talks insolently. He divides his *farce* into four parts and therein says nothing convincing or sensible.

For the unfortunate John, Photius feels a more than theological hatred. In Cod. 75 he is again subjected to the most scathing arraignment. We are told for the second time that he is *ὅμοιος αὐτῷ* and in style is altogether lacking in energy (*τόνος*) and majesty. Not only is he impious in his arguments but absolutely unsound (*σαθρός*) and weak. . . . In all his writings he is guilty not merely of vain utterances but of puerile tastelessness (*παιδαριώδους ἀπειροκαλίας*).

Theophylactus¹¹ has a style of some charm but an extravagant use of tropes and figurative language ends in frigidity and childish ineptitude (*νεανικὴν ἀπειροκαλίαν*).

Sergius:¹² "His discourse blooming with native charm (*ἐμφύτῳ ὁ λόγος ἀνθῶν χάριτι*)."

¹Cod. 6.

³Cod. 15.

⁵Cod. 32.

⁷Cod. 40.

⁹Cod. 45.

¹¹Cod. 65.

²Cod. 13.

⁴Cod. 26.

⁶Cod. 35.

⁸Cod. 44.

¹⁰Cod. 55.

¹²Cod. 67.

Candidus¹ does not have a style suitable to history for he uses a poetical diction in a manner tasteless and sophomoric (*ἀπειροκάλως καὶ μειρακιωδῶς*) and his composition falls into rough and discordant dithyrambic bombast. He introduces innovations in structure so as to bore the listener and to step beyond the confines of the agreeable (*τοῦ ἡδέος ὑπερόριος*).

Olympiodorus² "is clear in style but listless and languid and descends to plebeian loquacity (*χυδαιολογίαν*)."

John Chrysostom:³ "He is brilliant and clear and adorns persuasion with charm." So also in Cod. 174 this writer is accorded the highest praise:

His style displays brilliancy and inventiveness together with a habitual clearness and purity disclosing fertility of thought and most appropriate wealth of examples. . . . I have always marveled at that thrice-blessed man in that in all his discourses he was accomplishing his purpose, namely, giving help to his hearers.

Zosimus⁴ "is impious in his religious beliefs and often snarls (*ὑλακτῶν*) at the pious, but in style is concise, clear, and distinct, nor does he dwell apart from charm (*οὐ τοῦ ἡδέος ἀφικισμένος*)."

Clement of Alexandria⁵ in his *ὑποτυπώσεις* is scored for blasphemy and heresy—*φλυαρεῖ, βλασφημεῖ, τερατεύεται* are Photius terms. In the *παιδαγωγός* (Cod. 110) his style is praised and his erudition (*πολυμάθεια*) is said to be impressive.

Lucius Charinus' book (called *οἱ τῶν ἀποστόλων περίοδοι*) is damned with the following strong language: "This book contains countless statements that are childish, incredible, basely invented, false, absurd, inconsistent, impious, and atheistic."⁶

Damascius⁷ is censured in similar terms and his impiety is all the more inexcusable in the eyes of Photius because "at the time when the light of piety was flooding the world he was sleeping under the deep darkness of idolatry."

The impious Eunomius⁸ is very severely handled: "His composition is so forced, condensed, and harsh that the reader must

¹Cod. 79. ²Cod. 80. ³Cod. 86. ⁴Cod. 98. ⁵Cod. 109. ⁶Cod. 114. ⁷Cod. 130.

⁸Cod. 138. This caustic criticism is worth quoting entire because of the terminology used: *συνθήκη τε αὐτῆ ἐκβεβιασμένη καὶ συμπεπιεσμένη καὶ ἔκκροτος, ὡς ἀνάγκη εἶναι τῇ ἀναγινώσκοντι τὰ ἐκείνου τύπτειν σφοδρῶς τὸν ἀέρα τοῖς χεῖλεσιν, εἰ μέλλοι τρανῶς ἀπαγγέλλειν ἃ περιτραχύνων καὶ συστρέφων συνθλίβων τε καὶ παρεμβάλλων καὶ ἀκρωτηριάων ἐκείνος μόλις συνέταττε.*

violently beat the air with his lips if he is to recite clearly what the author has with difficulty composed by roughening, condensing, squeezing, interpolating, and mutilating."

Inasmuch as Basil the Great,¹ Bishop of Caesarea, was the great champion of orthodoxy in the fourth century, we may expect to find praise for him. Photius says that Basil is *ἄριστος* in all his discourses, possessing purity and distinctness and that he is a lover of sweetness and brilliancy, with a fluid impromptu style, as if causing a stream to gush forth (*ρέων τῷ λόγῳ, καὶ ὥσπερ ἐξ αὐτοσχεδίου πηγάζων τὸ ρεῖθρον*). As an orator he is to be compared to Plato and Demosthenes in civil and panegyric oratory.

Galen,² the great writer in medicine, is said to be pure and distinct in diction and arrangement:

In all his works he is a deep thinker, although in many of his writings by loading (*φορτίζων*) his books with the diffuse and with divagations and by spun-out (*σχοινοτενής*) periods, he confounds and obscures (*συνγχεί καὶ σκοτοῖ*) the thought. And chopping up (*διακόπτων*), as it were, his context he gives *ennui* to the listener because of his garrulity.

Himerius:³ "As far as my knowledge goes, no one has made such a pleasing and charming use of tropes."

Theodorus:⁴ "By his prolixities and digressions he sheds no little darkness over his writings (*οὐκ ὀλίγον ζόφον κατασκεδάζει*)."

Ptolemy:⁵ "This writer is somewhat empty (*ὑπόκενος*) and excessively fond of braggadocio and is lacking in urbanity."

Sophronius:⁶ "In his innovations he is like a proudly prancing colt."

We may conclude at this point our survey of the literary criticism in Photius; a body of criticism which is of importance both because of its intrinsic worth and as representing Byzantine criticism in general, although not written by a professed critic or rhetorician. It cannot be denied that there is much that is original and novel in these critiques, and we see evidenced in them a point of view, a modern tone frequently, which cannot be observed in previous writers. It is for these reasons that Photius deserves a higher position in the history of criticism than it has been his fortune to enjoy.

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¹Cod. 141.

²Cod. 164.

³Cod. 165.

⁴Cod. 177.

⁵Cod. 190.

⁶Cod. 231.



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